THE SECRET OF ASIA

By T. L. VASWANI

GANESH & CO. MADRAS

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ESSAYS ON

THE SPIRIT OF ASIAN CULTURE

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T. L. VASWANI, M.A.

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The title-essay of this book (which sets the rhythm to the whole) is based on a speech made by Professor Vaswani in Karachi at the conclusion of a lecture by Mr. James H. Cousins on "The Cultural Unity of Asia" at which Professor Vaswani presided. Mr. Cousins had taken, as the central thought of his lecture, a sentence from a book by a Japanese author ("Ideals of the East," by Kakuzo Okakura), "Asia is *one*." In the course of his lecture, Mr. Cousins advocated the formation of an Indian Academy for the collection, co-ordination and dissemination of information on all phases of Asian culture. This project was supported by Professor Vaswani, and had the hearty agreement of the audience. The publishers hope that this book may help towards the founding of such a valuable and much needed institution; and they will be happy to forward enquiries to the proper quarter.

CONTENTS

THE SECRET OF ASIA

THE SPIRIT OF ASIAN CULTURE

The word for 'culture' in ancient books is *prabuddhita*. He who, by being adored alike in India, China, Korea and Japan, has become the nexus of the nations of the East—Sakyamuni Buddha—was the typical man of 'Culture'. This culture, *prabuddhita*, is not mere understanding, the *verstanden* of German philosophy. Culture is the life of the higher reason in man. India has been a votary of culture from the beginning of her days; indeed it has been said over and over again in Indian scriptures that there is no *mukti* (salvation) without culture. Knowledge is increase of sorrow; such is the sentiment of an ancient Jewish writer. The Aryan sentiment is different; knowledge is the *ending* of sorrow. This knowledge, this higher reason, is often referred to, also as *darshan*, vision. Of what? Vision of the One Eternal Self in all. *There* to my mind, is the very secret of Asian culture.

Asia is one because Asia has borne witness to this Spirit-consciousness through the ages. The culture problem has been approached in the East from diverse standpoints,—intellectual, aesthetic, ethical, religious; it has engaged the attention of thinkers and poets and prophets in India, in Persia, in China, in Japan, in Arabia, in Afghanistan. The problem has been interpreted in diverse tongues and diverse ways; but there is, I believe, an underlying unity. For the soul-consciousness of Asia is one. It is indicated in the text of a Upanishad which says:—"The Eternal is one; He hath no caste". Asian culture is one continuous effort through the ages to interpret in art and poetry and philosophy and worship this consciousness of the One Eternal Self in all. Not without significance is the fact that all the world-religions have been born in Asia. Hindusim, Buddhsim, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Islam are Asian in their inspiration; and Christianity is a gift of the East to the West. Asia, unlike Europe, has not talked of conflict between science and religion. Nor have Asian sages imagined, as some western thinkers have, a conflict between culture and nature. Culture in India has been regarded as growing out of nature's inspiration; and some of the noblest books which have enriched the world's literature were written in *asrams*, in forest-universities.

Asian culture, again, is not like the *kulturs* of European nations, an aggressive force. The ancient culture of India developed on no narrow nationalism ; it was inspired by profound reverence for humanity, indeed for all forms of life. Kinship with all creatures in and through the Universal Self,—*that* was the supreme conviction of Hindu and Buddhist cultures in their highest forms.

In how many ways Indian art and literature and philosophy and science and civilization and faith influenced nations of the East and West it would take much time to tell. An Academy of Indian Culture is urgently needed to draw together scholars and thinkers, and show, by careful study and research, the vital values of Indian culture. I will only say one thing in this connection ; Sind has played no small part in the cultural development of the East. Not many may know that in the pre-Islamic period of Indian history, Sind was a stronghold of Buddhism ; and soon after the coming of Islam, Sind was linked up with Asia and Europe through Bagdad. Bagdad was the centre of Khilafat in those days, the centre of Muslim culture ; and to the Court of Bagdad went Sindhi scholars, Sindhi doctors, Sindhi philosophers and poets. It was Sindhi pundits who translated into Arabic and Persian some of the great books in Sanskrit literature. These

translations Arabian scholars carried to some of the great universities of mediaeval Europe. Here is a wide field for research open to young Sindhis. Out of knowledge comes self-respect; and when Sindhis grow into a knowledge of Sind's achievements in the past, there will be born in their hearts a new patriotism, a noble self-respect; then, too, will they realise their responsibilites as inheritors of Aryan idealism.

Asian culture is a fascinating subject; it is a subject, too, of profound interest to us at this hour when we are anxious to develop a system of national culture with a view to enabling India to re-utter Herself and to go upon her great mission of help and healing to the nations. Asian idealism, is the world's piteous need to-day. The Vision Spiritual was the secret of Asiatic greatness in the past; the Vision Spiritual is what a bankrupt Europe needs urgently to-day to enrich civilization. As that seer of science, the late Professor. Tyndal, said "The light once came from the East; once more will the light return to Europe from the East." I believe profoundly in Asia's spiritual message to the West. The world looks to Indians to give the message; and they can give it,—but on one condition; that they do it in deep humility for the service of humanity. Patriotism tarnished with pride, with passion, with hate and strife, will *not* make India great. A

Chinese sage has said: "Be gentle and you will be bold; be simple and you will be liberal; be humble and you will be a leader among men." And if India is to be, as I believe the Spirit of History wants Her to be, a spiritual leader among the nations, she must be *humble*, —a Servant of Humanity, a servant of God. The modern age dominated by machinery and materialism may yet be saved by the spirit of Asian culture, by the Vision Spiritual which has inspired the philosophies and literatures and arts and idealisms of the East.

THE SECRET OF ASIA'S VITALITY

Ahmed Abdullah is a powerful and prolific novelist. He is a native of Afghanistan. His stories, simple in structure, are told with such art that the purpose seldom overshadows the plot; and the purpose, in several of them, is to interpret and vindicate the genius of the East. An Oriental, he enters easily into the mind of eastern nations; he has that discipline and energy of mind which I miss in the pages of Kipling, who often indulges in exaggeration and flamboyant insolence concerning eastern life. He has not the white heat of Kipling; he has the light of a radiant idealism; and some of his stories have distilled not a little of the real essence of the Oriental consciousness.

One of these stories is "Batoum—An Impression in Civilization." Batoum is a town in Russia; Ahmed Abdullah records in this story his impressions of the place and the people. He looks into the face of eastern men and women in the streets, 'an endless, fascinating variety.' "Asia, I said to myself," writes Ahmed Abdullah, "and perhaps my heart beat a little faster." This Afghan has an eastern

heart full of love for Asia and her people. And he thinks of the ships in the harbour, of the many little shops, of the trade of Batoum with the world. "It is here," he says, "that I shall find Europe," and he walks from shop to shop. He visits a shop selling American shoes, each pair for thirty roubles; the clerk is a Persian; "He had been speaking in Russian," writes Ahmed Abdullah, "Now I addressed him in Persian. He smiled and showed me another pair of shoes; I bought them. They cost me twelve roubles. They were made in Japan." He walks to another shop bearing a French name, "Ville de Paris"—a perfumery store, the owner being a Sikh from India wearing a blue turban with a bit of steel stuck in his folds. He asks for perfume, and some long bottles are shown him. "But have you no French perfumes"? he enquires; "You call your establishment the Ville de Paris ?" "Yes", replies the Sikh "I carry French perfume very high priced. But the perfume I have shown you is cheaper and better. Take this attar of roses. It will remind you of Kashmere." He walked to another shop, the owner was an American and the shop was a candy booth; but the sweets were imported from India! So in the centre of trade in European Russia, in the very midst of the new wealth, the hotel, the music hall, the travelling salesmen of Europe and America—yes, in the

midst of "the European women who paraded the streets"—was Asia still alive; and "European coats and trousers" in this place, says Ahmed Abdullah, "look as much out of place as knickerbockers and nailed boots in some dim cathedral aisle."

The Vitality of Asia;—this is the idea interpreted by this Afghan fiction writer. In an eloquent passage, he says—"Always since the world evolved from a pellet of star-dust, has the West been swallowed by the East". And he proceeds to tell us of the Mongol tribes who centuries ago swept over Europe, conquering Russia and Germany and almost overthrowing Russian Europe on the plain of the Chalons; of the Arabs conquering Spain and Sicily and driving the picked chivalry of Europe out of Palestine; of the Turks threatening all Central Europe and overcoming the Eastern Empire of Rome. "Always" he adds, "has the West given way before the East". Is it always? Is not Europe to-day the superior of Asia? Is not Islam in agony? Are not Mesopotamia and Syria and Asia Minor and Arabia and Persia at the mercy of European powers? Is not India weak? Weak; therefore I say, take heed; "Beware of the tears of the weak," says an ancient Indian scripture. Already the weak throughout the East, the Hindus and Muslims in India, and Egypt and Persia and Algeria

and Asia Minor smart under a sense of domination by the selfish aggressive imperialisms of the West. You may exploit the East to-day; but your Karma will come back to you one day. Such is the law. An eminent thinker of Belgium rightly said: "In politics every thing passes away, but it comes back in history". And the fate of the weak will, I believe, make the future of the East and therefore, the future of the world! The East is not dead; she has only slept; she is walking up again to meet Europe's challenge, the challenge of a civilization which is a revolt against the civilization soul of man. In a passage of great power and beauty, Ahmed Abdullah says: "Always, since first race spoke to race across the chasm of mistrust and dislike, has Asia taught and influenced Europe. This influence, this teaching, has time and again lain stagnant for centuries, but without rotting or staling, always keeping intact the marvel and the swing of its energy, its vitality. Asia has given to Europe the first fruits of civilization and culture; letters, articulate speech, authentic medicine, astronomy, the knowledge to guide a ship out of the sight of land. We know that early Mongols and Malays reached the south Pacific and America; that early Hindus converted and civilized Java; that the Arabs traded with China before Mahomed was born. All these things were

done when an expedition to Britain or Gaul or Germany appeared to the Romans as a wonderful audacity, worthy to be celebrated in prose and poetry!" And again: "Nothing European has yet taken firm root in Asia. If England left India to-morrow, in spite of three hundred years the very name of England would be forgotten. Thus with the American in the Phillipines, with the French in Indo-China; not one Asian nation, not a single tribe has ever become completely Europeanized. Not a single branch of knowledge has even penetrated into Asia unless it comes from Asia in the first place. Europe has copied. But Europe has never originated!" For 'copied' I would substitute 'assimilated.' European civilization is a civilization of assimilation. The two greatest things, to my mind, in the life and literature of Europe are Christianity and Democracy. But who that knows history will deny that Christianity is a gift of the East to the West. As for Democracy, so competent a critic as Maine has recognised that "democratic institutions are essentially Aryan and spread from India to Europe."

The democratic principle, indeed, is still alive in the panchayat system of our social life. India is still alive; consider the spread of the new national movement in this land. Wonderful is the vitality of the East. The growing

unrest throughout the East is a witness to that vitality. Would the Orient evolve a new order out of this unrest? Would it yet lift itself above the tempests and clouds of today? Would it be able to meet the new challenge of Europe? Then must it shun hate and strife, and secure a new synthesis of culture and civilization: culture realised in and through religion, morality, art, literature: civilization realised in and through politics, industry, agriculture and the appointments and institutions of social life. India was great long ago when she realised the unity of these two—culture and civilization. But later her men of culture developed a religion and ethic of asceticism, and separating themselves from life, stood outside the movement of civilization, leaving the country to its sad fate. There is no culture without a vision of the Beautiful and a sense of the Ideal. And there is no civilization without a struggle to achieve national freedom. Hence the need of organising *ashramas*, opening up national institutions, developing vernaculars and literary and art-revivals; hence the need of educating students, young men, the middle class men, the masses, the women of the country, educating them to freedom and helping them to realise the value of protest against the present order. For there is no longing for freedom without a protest

against injustice and wrong. Only let that protest be made, not in the spirit of hate and strife, but in that spirit of idealism which is reverent of humanity and which is, to my mind, the secret of Asia's vitality, and the eternal message of her culture and history.

THE SOUL OF HINDU ART

At this hour when critics speak of India as if her children had no capacity, no courage, no political perception, no democratic consciousness, no culture, no civilization worth considering, it were well if something were known to young men of the Aryan civilization, so that they might understand in some measure what India has achieved and aspired to through the centuries. None has the right to call himself educated who does not understand the history of his own country; and the young man who would help India at this hour must learn at once to assimilate the nobler influences of western life and also understand India's past; he must, with a passionate loyalty to facts, study Indian culture and modern India's life in its many aspects, its possibilities, its failings, its aspirations towards a better order.

Art is a part of a nation's culture; and I wish here to interpret some aspects of Hindu art-consciousness and to indicate their value for modern life. And, to start with, it is good to remember that the Hindu art-consciousness has not been a static thing; it has passed through

a process of development; and that development shows traces of influences of other countries. The Mahabharata ascribes several buildings to a spirit called *Asura Maya*, and if this refers to the *Ahura Mazda* of the Zorastrain religion, it is easy to understand why he is honoured in ancient books as the architect of several wonderful buildings. Asura Maya represents the Spirit of Persia; and Persia has influenced Indian art. It has been pointed out that some of the old caves in India are modelled after the rock-cut tombs of Persia; the Sarnath sculptures and the palaces and halls of Pataliputra bear the impress of Persian masonry and architecture. India's life was not ringed round with a fence, cut off from communion with the world's larger life. India had commerce with Rome and Egypt and Babylon; and Indians had colonies in Siam, Cambodia, Java. Indian culture influenced other nations and was influenced by their cultures. Persia was one of these Nations. Another was Greece. I do not accept the theory of the Greek origin of the Buddha images; but modern investigations show the influence of Hellenistic technique on Indian art. There is a significant resemblance between some Buddhist effigies and Greek gods; and Buddhism influenced Hindu art. The Buddhist Nirvana was the extinction of desires; 'the Great Renunciation' of the Master haun-

ted the Buddhist's thoughts and influenced the Hindu art-consciousness. The art representations at Amravati in the Madras Presidency are alive with a sense of the Dukka, the world-sorrow which had entered into the heart of the Master. There was a time, doubtless, in India's history when asceticism dominated the thoughts of India's thinkers, and art was discouraged, being regarded as only a means to pleasure. But asceticism could not long control Aryan thought. Life everywhere asks for liberation, for self-utterance, for worship of the Beautiful; and the Hindu came to understand that art was a potent help to religion. Religious art was developed in response to the Hindu's need of ritual, sacraments and cult images. 'Name' and 'form' were, doubtless, inapplicable to the Brahman, but they had their place in the programme of human life and in the religion of Bhakti which was developed as the consciousness deepened that God the Eternal becomes God the Beautiful in His *avataras* on the human plane. So it is that the cult of Rama and the cult of Krishna enriched the Hindu art-consciousness, and helped the development of a mystical, symbolical school of art in India.

In Indian bazaars may be found to-day several pictures unnoticed, uncared for by educated Indians, but charged with deep interest to the student of Indian art. Rama's return to

Ayodhya, Lakshman's devotion to Rama, Sita's love for him, his people's loyalty to him as he goes to the great forest in obedience to his father's word,—Krishna playing on the flute under a flowering tree, Radha's quest of Krishna the runaway, the Gopis' devotion to the divine cowherd, Krishna's love for the cow, Krishna's conduct in the car on the Kuru-field, the world-vision of Arjuna when his inner eye is opened by grace—these and other themes are represented in cheap bazaar-pictures and have a meaning for the student of mystical, symbolical art. Hindu art-consciousness, then, we may say, rests not on the ascetic but the sacramental view of life. The Hindu artist was not afraid of life; he recognised at once the beauty and frailty of life; things are phenomena, but in the phenomenal is the appearance and evolution of the Self. From the Hindu standpoint the spheres of æsthetic experience are Nature, the Soul, and Humanity. Nature's pathways are strewn with Beauty; the kingdom of man is charged with the presence of Love; and the Soul craves for Happiness which cometh not to the violent but to those who glimpse the Beauty within. What, then, is Beauty? It is not a matter of lines and colours and circles; beauty, as the Hindu artist interprets it, is the shining of the Eternal Self; it is a call from the World-Soul to the self within; it

belongs, therefore, to the spiritual energy which we express on the earth-plane through our senses and intelligence; the energy of the Soul builds the Beautiful in the midst of the sickness and sorrow, the injustice and cruelty which often remind man of his bondage in life.

The Beautiful is the Free. Here is the first mark of Beauty. The rugged face of the *Sadhu* is beautiful; it is the face of a free man. Artifice is the death of art; the peasant girl in her simple dress, unconscious of the golden glory of her face, is beautiful; the fashionable fop with his artificial dress and artificial curls is not. Visiting, some weeks ago, the ruins of Arora, once famous in song and story, now unremembered even by the sons of Sind, I saw an old well from which the poor, simple boys and girls of the village were drawing water by turning again and again a primitive looking Persian wheel. The work did not tire them; they turned it round and round, finding joy in the work; they looked beautiful; they did their work so spontaneously, so disinterestedly. The work was their play; it enabled them to express their energy. In that free play-work they felt happy, they looked beautiful. The Beautiful is the Free. One sad thing about our modern houses is that they are ugly; they are built for the pleasure or profit of the wealthy few. The red-brick houses

in Hirabad and the massive storied buildings in Karachi do not express the freedom of the human soul. They tell, rather, of the toil and sufferings of men and women, of the success achieved by the 'educated' in snatching silver from their ignorant, helpless brethren; of the efforts made by the landlord to give the lowest possible wage to the labourer in the crowded field of competition. Your red-brick houses are built with blood-money; your massive buildings are made by bondsmen. But look at some of the old Hindu and Buddhist temples; centuries have not stained them; they look beautiful still; the builders rejoiced in their work; they poured love and devotion on their labour; and still in some of our villages, where something of the old art-consciousness is alive, you will find the craftsman setting to his work singing songs. Is it not true that art is an expression of the *ananda*, the joy which Eternal Love has poured upon the human heart?

Another characteristic of the Beautiful is associated with the Sanskrit word, *santi*, peace, repose. Beauty and discord cannot dwell together; restfulness is awakened by the truly beautiful; beauty has a healing virtue. So of St. Francis Xavier it has been said that the splendour of his most beautiful countenance made broken hearts serene. The artist, according to the injunction of Indian books, was to

withdraw himself from tumult and fever; he was to enter into Inner Silence, and draw out of the silence of his heart the forms of Beauty. The artist was to practise the yoga of silence, of meditation. 'As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.' The artist was to think in his heart; he was to brood on the Infinite in him; he was to listen to the chanting of strange voices in the daily developing drama of nature. How different this conception of the artist from what we are familiar with in some modern books! Read, for instance, the novel recently published by Mr. Somerset Maugham called "The Moon and Sixpence." The story gives us the author's idea of a model artist.

The hero of the novel is a painter, Strickland. He is inspired one day to desert his wife and children. He goes to Paris. He spurns all counsels to return to his wife. 'God damn my wife,' he says, 'she is an excellent woman, I wish she was in Hell!' He falls ill, and is nursed by a friend, Mr. Stroeve. He falls in love with Mrs. Stroeve. He seduces her, then deserts her; she poisons herself; he goes to Tahiti, marries there a native girl, and beats her! This is a man whom the author regards as an 'artistic genius' and whose work is called 'beautiful and obscene.' Nothing obscene is beautiful, such is the conviction of the Hindu artist; for beauty is a benediction of the Higher Self, and the artist

must meditate on the Eternal Beautiful in the inner silence. It is easy now to understand why Hindu art is called idealistic, subjective. It is not subjective in the sense which regards beauty as an illusion. Beauty is not an illusion; it is a revelation of the Higher Self. Beauty is subjective only in the sense that it is not physical: it is subtle, and is to be seen by the Eye of the Soul. There is wisdom in the old Indian proverb: 'Beauty is in the eye of him who sees it.' Hindu art, again, is symbolic, religious; it is dominated by a spiritual striving for communion with the Highest. Ferguson in his great book has done well to point out that Hindu architecture is controlled by a religious motive; and to see some temples in India is to feel subdued, overawed, overshadowed, by the Spirit in whom is the fulness of life and joy. India's history is yet to be written; and the student of art will help the scholar in that great task; for Hindu art is a witness to India's history. Such an art (charged with passion for humanity, with aspiration for the Infinite, with a sense of the sacramental value of life, with reverence for that Mystery whose contact with us makes the world a daily wonderland) points to a period in history when art was wedded to humanity, when India's social order was not plutocratic, and India's creative and imaginative sensibilities

were well developed. To-day, we miss the influence of art in our public life and institutions; the phonograph is fast displacing our music, and the craze for the cinematograph draws the crowds away from the simple stage which has no freak dancing and freak decoration, but which interprets the musical lives of man such as Prahlad and Rama and Krishna. To-day we oppose criticism to art, and much of what passes current as criticism is shallow. We need artists in politics, in social work, in religion—men who, with a profound sense of the beautiful in life, will be reconcilers, not cynics, builders, not iconclastic sectaries—optimists that would see the good within human reach, not pessimists who think there is no hope for the nation in the coming days. Depression never helped the cause of democracy. It is the creative impulse of the artist which our public life needs for its renovation.

Not ascetics but men with rich, human interest in life were the Hindu artists of old; and the Hindu art-consciousness left its impress on the ideals and activities of the nation. Luxury did not find a congenial soil in the India of those days; the very kings were simple in dress and living; slum dwellers were unknown as much as multi-millionaires; India was not under a commercial-industrial *regime* such as we have to-day. The *swadeshi* things India

produced expressed the craftsman's joy in his work; they were simple, as so many we receive from Manchester to-day are manufactured shows; they were beautiful and made India's name famous in far-off lands. In an old African song sung by a negro to the lady of his love, we have a beautiful little reference to the 'beautiful Madras kerchief' produced in the long ago.

The hospitality of the villager, the ploughman's respect for his fields, the hand-loom industry, the temples built in places with a wide range of vision, the simplicity of domestic life, the aspiration for *santi*, the faith in Divinity, in nature and in the little ones, the attitude of *ahimsa* to lower animals, the sense of the One Life living and moving and growing in all—these and other marks of Aryan civilization were a witness to the fact that the Hindu had developed an aesthetic type of culture.

Great is the value of this culture, this art-consciousness for modern life. The Hindu artist did not conceive of art as an escape to amusement; he thought of Art as a Vision of the Heart, and he knew that vision comes through life. Art with him was a call to noble living; it was a call to simple life, to nature-communion, to self-control and self-renunciation. Therefore did the Hindu avoid luxury, looking for beauty in common life, in the simple homely things

which we have neglected in the mechanical routine of modern life; therefore did he turn to nature and the scripture of the soul for art-inspiration; therefore did he meditate till he seemed to lose himself in the vision of the Only One.

The privilege open to him is open to all to-day. There are no monopolies in the Divine Government of the world. Only strive to live the life the Hindu artist lived: only strive to be simple, pure in heart, strong in the strength of self-renunciation. Heine says in one of his poems: 'On the wings of song, I carry my be-loved to the fairy banks of the Ganges.' And we, living in the land of the Ganges and the Sindhu, the Yamuna and the Godaveri—what do *we* carry? We carry with us the fogs and cares of earth; we carry sectarian strifes and the things which vex; we carry the dogmas which divide, and the *kultur* which starves the soul; we carry conventions, titles, trappings, tinsel; we carry cold, cunning schemes of loss and gain. How many are ready to carry the Beloved on wings of self-renouncing love? How many are ready to give up the thought of greatness, and grandeur, to put on poverty and pain, renouncing the pride of knowledge and gain? On as many as are ready will Beauty breathe Her benediction. And with the music of the harp and the flute, the music of the lyre and the lute,

She who in the House of Life plays with Love—She will sound through them a message for the help and healing of the Motherland.

THE HINDU DRAMA

In the olden, golden days of the East, great literary conferences *(Samajams)* were organised in India, called *Samhitis* and presided over by kings and princes, the patrons of the lettered world; and at these conferences the works of great poets were examined and discussed. These conferences, along with many other things characteristic of the old order, are become a memory of the past. Long and painful is the story of India's progressive degeneration—the story of how India suffered eclipse and passed into the night. From that night India is gradually emerging, and several scholars in different parts of the land are engaged to-day upon the great task of recovering the truths treasured in the traditions and scriptures and institutions of the past. Hindu idealism has its admirers in the West. Oriental Philosophy is no longer dismissed as a product of fancy or imagination; and the Hegelian theory that the movement of civilization was exhausted on the shores of the

Mediterranean, is rightly discredited to-day. Dr. Ray's patient researches have shown that the Hindu in ancient India was familiar in the domain of science with some of the things discovered by Europe in later times. Dr. B. N. Seal's great work on "The Physical Sciences of the Hindus" opens up another splendid field for research. A continental writer on jurisprudence points out that the Hindus anticipated centuries ago the corporation theory which is supplanting the theory of the Roman law, and which points out that the group-consciousness, the corporation, is responsible, not the individual alone. It is *not* true that the corporation has no soul.

As the years pass by, we see more and more of the shut-in splendours of Hindu thought and Hindu life. The ancient Aryans stood nearer to the Source of Life and Light than we do, for they were purer, simpler, more child-like than we, and so they saw deeper into Reality. They had deep insight into æsthetics. They had deep insight into the drama; and I shall here set forth my belief concerning the value of India's dramatic literature to the world.

To speak of Indian drama is to speak of Hindu-Buddhist drama. The Muhammadans did much for India: their art and architecture, their lyric poetry,—the poetry of Hafiz and the

mystic author of Masnavi—their energy and enthusiasm, their Semitic strength, their stern Monotheism, had their effect on the thought and life of India; but the Muhammadans brought no *drama*; the Persians, Arabs and Moghuls had no national theatre to be proud of.

Some time ago, it was believed that India borrowed the drama from Greece. It was said that the word for curtain in Sanskrit, *yavanika*, 'the Greek cloth,' pointed to the Greek origin of the Hindu theatre. It was forgotten that the word *yavanika* could also be interpreted to mean the fabric made by the Yavanas. It was said that the Hindu books referred to the 'Yavanis,' 'Greek women,' as the armour-bearers attending the kings of India. But surely all this would simply indicate that there was contact between India and Greece, a fact to which great importance is attached by those German thinkers who trace the doctrines of Pythagoras to the influence of Buddha and the Buddhist school! There was contact between India and Greece, but this does not mean that either imitated the other. Genius does not imitate; genius assimilates. Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice" is not an imitation of an old Italian book; Goethe's "Iphigenia" is not an imitation of Euripides; India has not borrowed from Greece; Greece has not borrowed from India; each developed literature in

obedience to the law of its own genius; and the more we study the subject, the more we understand that there were important differences between the classical drama of Greece and the romantic drama of the Hindus; for, as we shall understand presently, the Hindu drama disregarded the Greek 'unities' and pure tragedy; and its claims to originality, may, I think, be regarded as established.

Let me, in this connection, invite your attention to the extensive influence of Hindu drama. The *vidushaka* of Hindu dramatists is a forerunner of the 'fool and clown' of Roman and Elizabethan plays; and Piechel in his book on "The Home of the Puppet-Play" has done well in pointing out that Vidushaka is the original of the buffoon who appears in the plays of mediaeval Europe. The Hindu drama made its influence felt beyond what we call India to-day. The palm-leaf manuscripts discovered in Central Asia show that the Hindu drama was developed even so long ago as the Kusna age, when Central Asia was a part of the Indian Empire. Hindus emigrated to Java so early as the sixth century, and the shadow-plays of Java are a witness to the influence of the Hindu drama. In Burma, in Siam, in Combodia, the plays brought upon the stage were the Rama and Buddha dramas. The Rama

cycle was played even in the Malay Archipelago and in China.

The Hindu attitude to the drama accounts for the importance attached to it. In Christian Europe, the conflict between the theatre and the church appeared again and again. Chrysostom said :—"All dramatic arts come from the devil: laughter and gaiety come not from God but the devil". In Rome, the actor was despised. In China, the descendants of an actor were prohibited from competing in public examinations for five generations. The Hindu spoke of the *nritya sastra* as *the fifth Veda,* regarded the sage Bharata—the stage-manager of the gods—as having received a revelation concerning the theatre direct from Brahma who entered into meditation and out of the depths of Divine Thought brought out the *Nritya* Sastra for the joy of the universe.

It has been said the works of Kalidasa and other Hindu dramatists are of an artificial character. The statement reminds one of the words of Bhavabhuti :—"How little do they know who speak of us with censure? Possibly some exist, or will exist, of similar tastes with myself; for time is boundless and the world is wide." Centuries after these words were written was born the great poet Goethe who paid a tribute to Kalidasa in the famous words:

"Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms and the fruits of its decline,
And all by which the soul is charmed enraptured, feasted, fed?
Wouldst thou the earth and Heaven itself in one sole name combine?
I name thee, O Sakuntala, and all at once is said."

It is true, Hindu drama disregards the 'unities' of time and place; but not on that account should it be regarded as artificial. Greek and French writers observe the unities; but not the Elizabethan dramatists. Lessing, the great German art-critic, pointed out that it was good to cast off the fetters of the unities. Shakespeare ignored them in his dramas. The unities of time and place are, after all, Greek inventions which Hindu drama does well to disregard, but the unity of action and the unity of ideas are scrupulously observed by the Hindu dramatist; his perception of the law of karma links all things in the drama in a single chain of cause and effect; every drama has one internal centre, and the dramatic action is one, complete.

The accepted classification of dramas into the tragic and comic will not be found in Sanskrit books. A drama, from the Hindu standpoint, may be comic, addressing itself to the sense of the ridiculous. It often is a blend of the tragic and comic; it never is purely tragic;

violent action and highly sensational incidents must not be represented on the stage, for their effect on the nervous system and the mind would be not purification but depression. Suffering is not ignored, but the truth is recognised that suffering must be challenged in the spirit of resignation; for the world is one of law, and the law is good. The Greeks speak of fate; the Hindu dramatist points out that fate is what you have made, what you have earned for yourself; the chain of fate is forged by your character, your karma under the government of the gods; and if you suffer it is still for your good, for the end of the world-maya is joy, not struggle; peace, not pain.

Hence, too, the religious character of Hindu drama. Spain, Greece, England and India are the four great centres of original drama. In Spain and England there was a cleavage between the church and the world; but Greek drama grew out of the cult of Dionsyius, a cult which at one time threatened to crush Christianity; Hindu drama, like Greek drama, was religious in its motive and character; it was meant to instruct, elevate and purify the people; one thinks of the Passion Play of Obermergau.

Naturally every Hindu drama opens and closes with a benediction (*Nandi*). The plots are often taken from religious books, and the

introduction of supernatural characters is allowed. Does this argue improbability of action and the artificial character of the Hindu drama? But does not Shakespeare introduce ghosts in some of his dramas? and does the ghost in "Hamlet" mar the effect of the play? After all, is it not true that the supernatural mingles with men in actual life? The Hindu at any rate has believed that the Unseen and the visible world constitute one universe, that man walks with the Gods.

Another characteristic of Hindu drama is love of nature. The Greek dramatists, the great German poets like Goethe, Schiller, and Hauptmann, above all Shakespeare, show marvellous art in character drawing; their interest is concentrated on man; the Hindu dramatist shows his art in interpreting nature-life. Nature is to him the teacher, the inspirer of man. Hence it is you find that dramas were usually performed on the occasions of nature-festivals, frequently spring festivals which celebrated the rebirth of nature. The Hindu God of Love—Kama—is represented as the flower-winged archer boy; and in the great dramas of Kalidasa, you have passage after passage charged with lyric nature-love. The very first act of the drama "Vikrama and Urvasi" opens in the magnificent nature scenery of the Himalayan mountains; the

scene of Uttara Rama Charitra is laid in a forest; the hero of Meghadutta—Yaksha—is 'exiled' to the mountain Ratnagiri, and sends his love-message to his wife through a cloud; when Rama is exiled from his kingdom, he goes to the "picturesque heights of Chitrakuta." Oh to be with Rama and Yaksha on picturesque mountain heights! Not they, but we living in crowded cities, are in exile, blind to the growing wonder of Nature-life.

Again, Sakuntala's son, Bharata 'the supporter' of Bharatavarshya, is represented as having been born in the hallowed woods; and Kalidasa himself is, according to an ancient tradition, represented as lying after death on a lonely hill in Ceylon within hearing of the song of the sea. One recalls the legend of Montenegro that the great Vladika reposes on the mount of Lovtchen. "Sakuntala" is full of nature-atmosphere. Why is the heroine called Sakuntala? Vishvamitra has violated the vow of celibacy; the lovely child is born; he is smitten with remorse; he wants to enter the depths of forests and pass into the silence of prayer and penance; he invokes nature to come to the help of the girl; and the beautiful large-feathered Sakunta birds in the forest protect the sleeping beauty: and so she comes to be known as Sakuntala. Again she, the future queen-mother of Bharat, after whom the whole of

India is called the Bharatvarshaya, Sakuntala, is brought up in a forest hermitage. She waters the trees and calls them friends. She dresses the peacocks when they are wounded by the sharp blades of grass. When about to leave the forest to go to the court of king Dushyanta, she takes leave of the maidens with whom she has played from the beginning of her days, but she also bids an affectionate adieu to the creepers and birds and beasts of the forest; are they not her friends too? And as she is leaving them, all—the peacocks specially—cling to her reluctant to leave her.

The great dramas of India were written under the influence and inspiration of nature-fellowship; and so they make for mind-elevation, for purification. But there is no purification except through suffering, no self-enrichment except through self-renunication. The Hindu dramatists recognise this as a law of the visible order, and illustrate it over and over again in the stories of their heroes and heroines. After all, the problem of life is not solved through speculation but through self-loss, self-renunciation. Self-denial was the very first condition imposed on every one in ancient India who wished to enter the student *asrama* of life, and self-denial developed into self-renunciation when he entered the last *asrama*—that of the *Vanaprasta.*

No wonder these forest-hermits, growing daily in the beauty of self-renunciation, excited the admiration of Alexander the Great, who tried in vain to draw them into homage to himself. They were the servants of the only Love. What cared they for the conqueror ? No wonder kings and princes felt the fascination of these forest sages, and in some cases, themselves resigned their sceptres and sovereignty and went into the forest to live the life of self-abnegation. Goethe's women are the joy of his readers all over the world; but I wonder if they can compare with Sakuntala; and the secret of Sakuntala is her self-effacement.

One of the great dramatists of Austria has a drama called "Hero". "Hero" is a priestess who takes the vow of single blessedness, but is unequal to the demands of the vow and is overwhelmed by love. How superior is Sakuntala who realises the truth that love is not enjoyment but self-discipline in the school of life; that the noblest joy of love is only given him who partakes of the sacrament of suffering. So, too, Urvasi has to suffer and be purified through suffering. Pururavas, too, has to suffer and be purified; he goes in quest of her, he wanders over hill and dale, and at last, when he finds Urvasi, he, to quote the poet's words, 'lies weeping in her arms'.

In another drama, again, the "Hanuman Natak", the same idea is set forth, and Hanuman is represented as living the life of a Vanaprasta after the conquest of Lanka. So in the Buddhist drama "Nagananda," you read of the great king ready to offer himself to Garuda, if only to protect others. There is need to-day of a band of men to travel all over the country and stage such dramas. India's young men have made laudable efforts to stage Shakespeare; but Shakespeare has not reached the hearts of the people. Translation is often transformation; and after all it must never be forgotten that Shakespeare interprets the life and experiences of Europe; he and other great dramatists of the West are great because they represent the reality of their own experiences. A drama, to appeal to the heart of India, must represent the culture and experiences of the Indian people. The Roman drama, we read, failed of an appeal to the Romans because it followed Greek traditions and experiences. We want a people's drama. We need national dramas which may embody the wealth of India's literature and India's age-long experiences. We need a new theatre to present in a national form the new ideal for the uplift of India's masses; we need new *yatras*, new *Bharatkathas* for India's young men and women, so that they may be loyal to the truth

and the law of love. Shelley wrote words of wisdom in his "Defence of Poetry"—"The connection of poetry and social good", he pointed out, "is more observable in the drama than in any other form, and it is indisputable that the highest perfection of human society has ever corresponded with the highest dramatic excellence, and that the corruption or extinction of the drama in a nation where it has once flourished marks a corruption of manners and an extinction of the energies which sustain the soul of social life; for the end of social corruption is to destroy all sensibility to pleasure."

The Hindu drama will help India; it will help the world. The modern theatre in the West has lost touch with the lofty ideals of which religion is the great guardian. The German drama lacks form and the fine artistic sense which is allied to the moral ideal of life. It was a German writer who recently condemned the modern German theatre in emphatic terms:—"Plays," he said, "are produced so nauseating in their depravity and lasciviousness that they may well fill our soldiers with disgust at this decay of the national morals. The German people must not tolerate such degeneration...they must eradicate these plague spots that disfigure the radiant features of Germania". Nor is the

situation satisfactory in France. Questions of marriage, divorce, the rights of the illegitimate child are the questions which the French theatre discusses to-day. In his book called "Swedish Destinies" Strindberg has a story named "Autumn". The great Swedish writer represents a newly married woman as entering her room. And, says Strindberg, "she sang: 'What is the name of the land in which my darling dwells?' But alas! the voice was thin and sharp." Europe has long asked—"What is the name of the land in which the darling dwells?" but ah! the voice of Europe is thin and sharp; a new note rich and clear, in the dramatic world, must be sounded. India can sound the new note, if she will but be loyal to the impulses and intuitions of her race-consciousness. The Hindu drama is pre-eminently fitted to throw the challenge of its lofty idealism to the morbidity of European drama, to re-awaken a sense of the God-in-man, to recall the weary West to a sense of *karma*, the unseen *adrishta*, as the background for human life, a sense of the joy of nature-fellowship, of the sacrament of suffering, and the love that fulfils itself not in romance, but in the rapture of self-renunciation. What is the name of the land in which the darling dwells?

The beloved dwells in the heart; and in the name of the love with which I have loved them, I

ask the sons of the sages of the Bharatvarshaya, where Sita lived and suffered, where Rama renounced and loved, where Sakuntala loved and sang—to endeavour to have a Vision of the Heart: I ask them to strive to enter within and glimpse the Beauty that has inspired Hindu literature and art. The world is passing through the birth-pangs of a New Age; and it rests with them, under God's Providence, to decide what part India is to play in the reconstruction of the future. Therefore I ask the sons of India to remember who they are and what Ishwara expects of India in this hour of the world's agony; to bear with them wherever they stay and wherever they work, something of the beauty and calm of the India that was, and still is, in the thoughts and vision of some who live and labour for India today. I ask them to bear with them the belief in India the imperishable, in India the consecrate; and the great Rishis will mingle again with India's men and women and the great gods will walk again along India's earth, and the weary waiting world will listen again to the notes of the love which alone shall be for the healing of the wounds of the nations of East and West.

KRISHNA'S FLUTE

I

Krishna's Flute! What did it say? Krishna's *murli.* What did it declare? What secret of his heart did Krishna sing out in those wonderful notes which ravished the hearts of the maidens and the simple-folk, as he wandered, flute to his lips, from hamlet to hamlet in the long ago? There was joy in the notes; joy entered the hearts of those who heard him and the flute. And joy dwells in the home of the free. We seek with selfish hands to build houses of power; they become prison houses: they enchain the soul; we purchase power, position, the yellow dust called gold, at a heavy price; we buy the world and pay for it freedom; to become big is to be in bondage: and Krishna's Flute, with joy in the heart of it, was a call to men and women to break the three bonds of evil desires, and selfish actions and weak will, and to enter into the life of freedom.

The life of the *mukta*,—the free man,—what are its marks? What are the marks of life in general? To live is to respond and to receive.

When the plant dies it does not respond to light and air and water. When the horse dies, it does not respond to the master's call. When a man dies, he does not respond to his friends and family. To live is to respond; it is also to recieve; none of you but is what he is on account of the influences on him of others. Your body is an inheritance from your ancestors; your mind is, largely, a social inheritance; education and other social influences make you largely what you are. You live in the measure in which you respond and receive.

In a beautiful text in the "Gita", Krishna calls attention to two things we must do if we are to respond to Reality and live the life of the free man. The two things are, *tapasya* (discipline) and *yagna* (sacrifice). Strange teaching this—some will say—to ask you to do *tapasya!* yet I ask you to do *tapasya.* In ease and enjoyment have you long expired; and the situation of Sind* is so depressing; you have lived the life of *bhoga*; I summon you to the path of *tapasya.* Read the story of the nations; it is the resolves of men of *tapasya* that have made history, and revolutionised the lives of many. You run after the rich, the so-called big men; not often have such men helped the country. The Flute of Sri Krishna appealed to the hearts of the poor, simple shepherds

* This essay is based on a public lecture delivered in Sind.

and shepherdesses of Gokul and Brindaban; and at the festival of the free meet, not the proud of power, but the simple in heart with their shining lights of reverence and love. *Tapasya* generates the power of good, the power of service. There is the man of riches and learning; he speaks to you with strength or art and scholarship; you are not moved; but a *sadhu* comes; he speaks but a few artless words; you feel the uplift, the inspiration of his speech. Why? The *sadhu* is a man of *tapasya*, and there goes out into what he says and does the power of *tapasya*.

To *tapasya* add *yagna*. The Eternal is the Yagneswara, the Lord of Sacrifice. Offer your sacrifice and be blessed. *Yagna* is not the rite external. *Yagna* is what you offer to the Lord. "But what can *we* offer?" you ask. Ah! you dream of doing big things, when the Lord accepts a flower, a leaf, any little thing offered Him with devotion! I ask you not to run after greatness, but to try to be even a little useful to your community, your society, your country; a little thought of help, a little sympathy, a little act of kindness, a little deed of love—such is the *yagna* asked of you by the Yagneswara.

Responding to the Life of the Universe with *tapasya* and *yagna*, you will receive from the All-Giver the power to achieve; your life will

then be fruitful. There is in the ancient record the story of a woman, a fruitseller; Krishna is then a little child; the woman feels the mystic influence of Krishna's dark beauty; he wants some fruits; she insists on giving him *all the fruits* in her little basket; Krishna has grains of rice in his hands; he scatters them to her in return for her fruits, and every grain of rice, the story says, becomes a jewel in her hands. Such is the law; what you give to the Lord returns to you, a thousand fold; every grain becomes a jewel.

We must all learn to scatter, not hoard, our lives. In the strength of *tapasya* and *yagna*, re-arise, sons of the sages of the East! and vindicate India's message. Awake to utter again the Aryan wisdom. The nations need it; civilization needs it. Not in pride but in humility of the heart, in repentance and with new resolves, think of the mighty achievements of Aryavarta and your own feeble lives. You say you have a proud past; is the past proud of you? You say you have high traditions; do not the traditions lay on you high obligations to be fulfilled to-day? You say your fathers were great; do not your doings grieve them in the Brahmaloka? Let us confess before God and man that we have sinned against the Spirit. He has waited, He is waiting, in the rain and storm outside;

let us do *tapasya* and *yagna*; then will He enter again the Temple of India's heart and re-kindle the "Kindly" Light.

II

'Yours in Krishna and Christ'—such are the closing words of a beautiful letter I received some time ago from an English lady. Not so would write many Englishmen and Englishwomen to-day. The old missionary conception of Krishna is dominant in Christian circles; and I remember how much I offended an India-returned missionary of a Portestant church, because, in the course of an article, on 'The Christ of Ages,' which I contributed to a Christmas issue of the 'Christian Commonwealth' a few days before I left London for Karachi, I expressed my belief—it has been the conviction of the world's religious seers—that in Jesus and Krishna and Buddha and the other great Prophets of Humanity there has been the immanence and activity of the One Spirit of God, that the Wisdom of the World-Teachers is one though its Voices are many'. But this was too much for my missionary friend, who was angry because I mentioned Krishna in the same breath with Christ! He criticised my view and attacked the character of Krishna.

That missionary only represented a class

of persons who believe—many of them with the best of motives—that to sling stones at Krishna is to exalt Jesus! In a sermon at the City Temple, London, the distinguished preacher, Dr. F. Newton, said to his congregation:—'When I was a lad I saw a picture in which the artist—if we could call him an artist—tried to represent the future of China and India without the Gospel, a great moving multitude falling over an abyss into hell, through no fault of their own'! 'A great moving multitude falling over an abyss into hell'! What an ignorance of actual India is in this horrid picture! And ignorance and theological prejudice account for the distorted view of Sri Krishna in Christian lands. Unfortunately, that view influences many of the educated class in India; and I have heard some agree with a well-known man who said that the stories related of Krishna's life did more than anything else 'to destroy the morals and corrupt the imagination of Hindu youth'! It was not the stories of Krishna's life, it was the corrupt hearts of those who, putting on the mask of orthodoxy, were anxious to do evil things in the name of Krishna, that did harm to the Hindu faith. Fortunately, the corrupt lives of these priests and their 'mystery cults' have been exposed; and with a better knowledge of India and her past, educated Indians

are beginning to come into their own rich heritage of Aryavarta; and no small part of that heritage is the wonderful story of Krishna and the mighty inspiration of his Life,—his philosophy, his achievements, his Song.

Years ago I saw, in the historic town of Serampore, a little Krishna drama staged by simple peasants of the place. What devotion, what joy, what love of the beautiful and the good, were expressed in their simple, dramatic art!

A little theatre, exhibiting plays of Krishna and Rama and Buddha and other heroes of Indian history will be a truly democratic institution and will, I believe, do real service to the people; it will rouse that vigorous idealism which will rid religion of its dogmatic encumbrances and release Indian life from its bondage to customs and creeds. Simple peasants rejoiced the most in his company, as he did in theirs, in the long ago; and they who carry in their hearts something of the love and innocence of those peasant boys and girls will appreciate his life and its rich message to the modern age. Aryavarta's piteous call for wise counsel and right conduct in the hour of her peril, five thousand years ago, made him quit his beloved Brindaban for Mathura. Krishna the Singer, Krishna the Flute-Player passed from his little hamlet to council chamber, there

to give advice to India's princes; the Master-Musician, the lover of the peasant and the poor, became the statesman; and an ancient story has it that the simple peasants of Brindaban came one day to Mathura to meet him. They were brought into the durbar hall, and Krishna, dressed as a prince, advanced to greet them. But they would not look at *this* Krishna! What had these simple folk—the boys and girls, men and women of Brindaban—to do with Krishna arrayed in pomp and power? They stood by him, not looking at him, casting their eloquent eyes on the ground; they would converse with Krishna the Cowherd, not Krishna the Courtier. And he understood it all; and leaving the durbar, he put off the prince's dress, he put on the simple cowherd's clothes, and with naked feet and with the flute in his blessed hands, Krishna played and sang with the simple folk in the garden of the king.

Was it a winged instrument, this Flute of Krishna? It had joy in every movement of it; it ravished the hearts of the men and women who heard him play upon it. What did it say? What message did the mighty Singer send through the simple grace and freedom of its notes? Who can say? The ancient record tells how the rememberance of that Song lived in Radha's heart, and in the hearts of other *gopis* and the shepherds who heard it in the

long ago. The ancient record also says how in his manhood, too, he sang the Song, but this time on the Kurukshetra amid the strange destinies of the year that saw the five Pandavas face a mighty foe on the battlefield. A fragment only of that Song is enshrined in the Scripture named the 'Bhagwad-Gita'. What wisdom, what insight, what inspiration even in that fragment! Let Krishna's critics read it and pay him the homage of converted hearts!

The 'Gita', the little fragment of the Song of Krishna's Flute, is enough to show that he belongs not to one particular race but to all. The 'Gita' rises above race-bias; it sings of the Spirit Universal; and we are not worthy of him if we seek to imprison him in our little creeds and claim him as exclusively our own. Sri Krishna belongs to all nations. The message of this Flute-Player is a message of life and floats down the stream of ages from the Heart of Life Universal to the seekers after Life. In some brief blessed moments, he gave that message to Arjuna, the questioning, doubting, vacillating, weak-willed Arjuna. And was not the message he gave this:—"Stand up, Parantapa, and do thy duty?" And does not Arjuna represent the Hindu soul, honest, aspiring, idealistic, metaphysical, eager for a solution of the problems of the Ultimate, Absolute, but weak-willed, halting, shrinking from pain,

reluctant to see the Beauty of God through the veil of suffering? To the Arjuna-soul of India comes Sri Krishna's Message:—"Stand up, Parantapa, do thy duty!"

The Message is modern India's need. It is a message for the world. For at this hour, vice and vanity, luxury and pride have sapped the inner strength of civilization; at this hour, mechanism sits oppressively on the heart of life; at this hour humanity lies wounded in the house of her own children who have renounced the worship of Eternal Values and built altars to the gods of 'nationality,' 'empire,' 'race'. At this hour, in the silent spaces of the world's confusing sounds, comes Krishna's Message:—'Stand up, Parantapa, do thy duty!' For the people are in bondage, and men are needed everywhere—men of courage, truth and love—to stand up and rebuild the nations on the reality of the spiritual life. 'Stand up, Parantapa, do thy duty!' For pain is passing, but thy *dharma* is eternal; and what more foolish than to barter away the freedom of thy soul for a little ease from the strife of life?

'Stand up, Parantapa, do thy duty;' for the world's wounded heart needs help and healing.

'Stand up, Parantapa!' Stand up as a servant of Humanity! Thy Master stands by

thee, playing his sweetest melodies on the Flute. He plays and summons thee out to the storm of things. Wilt thou be a comrade of God?

EDUCATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

The problem of world reconstruction is fundamentally the problem of education. We hear to-day of the problem of industry; what is it in the last analysis? Higher wages? Larger output? Business organisation? Machinery? But behind all these is the one great problem, how to humanise industry, how to draw capital and labour closer together by a bond stronger than what Carlyle rightly condemned as 'the cash nexus'. And you cannot humanise industry by mere external rules; you must *educate* the social sense of the capitalist; you must effect some inner improvement of the employer. We hear of the social problem in India; caste has long played the monster and must go; our depressed classes and women have yet to win their proper place in society; devitalising customs which have made cowards of many in our midst must go; here too the problem is fundamentally one of education. Not wealth, not rank, but mind and character, will be the basis of the new

order we all are striving after with such a passionate longing to-day. There is the political problem; the new ideal, that of 'responsible Government,' demands all over the world educated electorates. Democracy must come to its own, and this demands democratic education. If it be true, as that diligent student of history—Mr. Ernest Barker—has urged, that the mind is the only final cause in history, is it an exaggeration to say that the problem of reconstruction is essentially one of the 'mind'—a problem of educational reconstruction?

A happy sign of the times is the earnest endeavour in different parts of the world to have a revaluation of education and to look at the educational problem from a new standpoint. Ireland has a national university; Wales is deeply interested in educational reconstruction; Fisher's Education Bill asks for a policy of widespread diffusion of elementary instruction; and recent educational conferences in England have emphasised the need of a 'new ideal' and a new spirit in education. In India the situation is less encouraging; but the idea that education must be reconstructed has gone from one end of the the country to the other. The cry for national education, the organisation of the Hindu university, the recognition of the supreme national necessity of

the principle of compulsion in education are hopeful signs. India moves slowly, but she moves.

The function of education is the training of the mind. I use the word 'mind' in a larger sense than the English thinker Bentham who identified it with the principle of calculation; I use the word to cover what is indicated by the two beautiful Sanskrit words, *manas* and *buddhi*. The man of education is one who can estimate the values of things with reference to an ideal; clever men calculate utilities; but educated men, men of culture, have a developed sense of values and a consciousness of life's ideal. We may speak of education, then, as a critique of life. Education is criticism. Only it is necessary to note that by criticism is meant not a creed of negation, a barren controversy of words, but the power of seeing life as a whole. Young men are often content to take only the examination point of view of education; they forget that it is life, fuller life, that is needed, and that the test of the educated man is not his job or cash, but his power to judge men and matters in the light of life's ideal. The man who has not this critical power, this power of seeing life as a whole, may have learning or skill or money or power, but he is not really educated; he is a stupid man for all

his gains of silver and gold; and 'the stupid man,' as an eminent thinker said, 'cannot be virtuous'.

Education is criticism and, therefore, essentially related to life. Have you specialised in literature? Literature is nothing if it does not reflect life. What wisdom of life is in one Shakespeare! And the epics and romances you read are charged with the meaning of life. Have you specialised in history? History brings a message of life; it is essentially a literature of personality. Are you devoted to the study of economics? Your text-books on economics record the life-experiences of Europe and America since the coming of the 'industrial revolution', and you must pause before you apply them to the life of modern India. Is philosophy your favourite subject? Philosophy, too, grows out of life, out of the *darshan,* the life-perceptions of the great thinkers; and if you could but look at the theories of a philosopher from his stand-point, and see their relation to his experiences and environment, you would see their truth, if you also recognise how inadequate they are to the task of uttering the fullness of That which alike the sages of India and Babylonia called, centuries ago, the 'One without a Second'. Educational reconstruction in India demands that knowledge be related to India's life. It

is life-education you need. Of memory emphasis there is enough and to spare in the current system of education; the new system of education must relate itself to the life of India, the people's life, the life of the nation. The present system has produced overworked, underpaid clerks and school masters; it is out of tune at once with the Aryan ideal and the culture of the modern West. Sixtyfour years ago the Astronomical Society of Berlin began the analytical and descriptive catalogue—now in 20 folio volumes—of three hundred thousand stars; the catalogue is the work of hundreds of astronomers and mathematicians. Have we a single work of this kind organised by any Indian university? Indian universities lack the educational atmosphere congenial to research, to that spirit of study and fellowship that brings together earnest students of thought as comrades in a common cause of understanding, interpreting and communing with the Great Reality, the Universe. In Europe and America science is being continually applied to practical undertakings, the problems of national life; Berlin has several large buildings resembling factories but really the laboratories of university professors. It was here that the late Professor Hoffmann worked and succeeded in producing indigo synthetically, thus inflicting injury on

the Indian production of natural indigo. Commercial universities pay the nation in the long run. Have we a single one in India? And how many books of historical criticism have the Indian universities produced? A history of India, Indian in sentiment, criticial in its estimate of India's civilization, her achievements and failures, her wisdom and the aspirations which spring eternal in her heart, has yet to be written. The present educational system retains its aloofness from the life of the nation. The Hindu and Islamic cultures have little meaning for the young graduate; nor is he given opportunities in India to assimilate the modern culture which the great universities of Europe and America study and enrich for the betterment and efficiency of the West.

Indian universities cannot help in the task of reconstruction as long as their freedom is fettered. Indian universities must exercise the right of self-determination. Independence of thought and freedom of development are essential to the health and enrichment of university life. Indian universities, in other words, must become national, in the right sense of the word; they will then become vernacular universities. Far be it from me to ignore the value of English and other European languages. I believe in the value of English literature, history and politics;

I belive that India, in order to be great, must develop a modern outlook on life. English is needed at the present stage of our political evolution as a medium of communication with the Government and the English nation; but this does not mean that English must be a substitute for the vernaculars. English can only supplement them as a second language. It is not possible, except for a very small class of 'free minds', to develop the minds of pupils by imparting to them education in a foreign tongue.

We need western knowledge; but to make it a force in the building of our national life, it should be imparted through the medium of the vernacular of each province. So may students develop into men, not imitating others but living their own original, God given lives, not echoes but living persons, a hundred per cent alive. Our emphasis must be on the vernaculars; and we must be vernacular to the very root, if we are to grow into a self-sustained nation. The great mass of any people will always be monolingual, and it is unpsychological to expect them to assimilate a foreign language. 'Education', said Ruskin, 'should be regulated by natural endowment,' and our vernaculars are our 'natural endowment.' It is our own language alone that can connect us with the past; and if we endeavour

to be modern without the inspiration of the past, we become only impotent imitators. Nor can it be denied that a foreign medium of education tends to create a cleavage between the educated classes and the masses; and if English education is to create a new caste of English-knowing Indians out of touch with the great mass of Indian humanity it will be a national calamity. Vernacular universities, such as I think of, will not only make the vernaculars of the provinces mediums of education; they will also encourage the study and development of the vernacular literatures.

The ideals of Indian heroes and India's faiths are still enshrined in the vernacular literatures. In how many of the homes of those who know English, but ignore the vernaculars, do the children hear the heroic stories of the Mahabharta and Râmayana? In how many are they taught to read of the heroic, human culture which made India what she was in the past? In how many are heard the national songs which have sprung from the very soil of our birth? It may be a vernacular university is long in coming, so far as Sind* is concerned; but is it too much to ask the local College to consider the desirability of having a chair in Sindhi

* This chapter is based on an address delivered in Sind.

literature? The Calcutta University has already a chair in the Bengali language and literature. It is true there has set in a long period during which Sind has been inarticulate even to her own children; but it would be wrong to argue that we have no indigenous literature. The works of Sha Latif, Sami and other singer-seers of Sind could well afford materials for lectures in Sindhi literature; these poets are still eloquent; they sing of the winds and roses, the rocks and trees, of the stars that shine with myriad lights, and the moom-beams that bring the beloved dreams. They sing of the old simplicities and of the sons and daughters of the desert—the beautiful blameless desert; they sing of the wonder of the world, of the love that looks with joy on death, of the beauty that makes us sad and true and pure. And do they not, in stories and parables and lyrics and love-laments, sing of the homeland that is simple and beautiful; of patriotism that does not shut out other lands, other types of sympathy and life—the patriotism not of pride or hate, but of the lover who blesses all, seeing in each some reflection of the beauty and mystery of the only Beloved? Sindhi literature will give a new tone to Sindhi life; therefore I plead for its revival in these days when, in other provinces, efforts are being made to develop indigenous vernacular

literature. We are at the dawn of what some hope may develop into a day of great things for India; and I ask all Sindhis to take a broad big view of their future and of the part which our language and literature may play in the building of the future.

If education is to develop the life of the nation, it must be inspired by the idea of the essential values of every child. Millions of our children drift through life without education to-day; there is an appalling wastage of mind-power. No satisfactory basis can be secured for reconstruction without a generous scheme of free compulsory education. The argument that such a scheme will involve heavy expenditure is irrelevant. What nation ever desired to make education a commercial venture, profitable in the immediate future? And which nation will fail to recognise that in the long run education is the best investment? The question of cost is no more than the question of choosing between using the national income wisely, and spending it extravagantly on all things except the one thing needful. India has believed from the beginning of her days that educational opportunities should be unrestricted, open to all students, no matter how poor they be. India has believed that education is a necessity of every human personality; it is an urgent need of every one to-day when we

wish to democratise the Indian administration. Compulsory attendance at school up to fourteen and at continuation schools up to eighteen, is urged by Mr. Fisher; in Canada every boy is educated up to sixteen. In Germany compulsory education is continued up to twentyone; and the French Minister of Education has a scheme for making education compulsory up to twenty-one. It is for us in India to move forward in obedience to the call of the new spirit. The plea of economy is irritating to the educationist who believes that education is economy, that every school is a national investment. Every child is a citizen of the future, and not to give every child a chance to grow in mind, body and character is to betray the nation's future.

Not till education becomes the most acceptable item in the annual budget may it be possible for India's children to realise their true manhood. The great masses in the rural areas and in towns must be educated, and poverty should be no bar to education. In ancient Greece and India, as in the Arabian universities of the Middle Ages, education was free; and even to-day in the great university of Cairo, founded in the tenth century, about nine thousand students coming from remote countries receive free education, and several of them are boarded and lodged gratuitously.

'May I not add in this connection that it is necessary to encourage among students the love of sport? Students should be given opportunities to express their untramelled, spontaneous energy in open spaces or play-grounds. It is my daily deepening conviction that play-centres can do more for students than lessons and lectures and exercises in English composition and mathematics. The object of education is not to make money-making machines, but to help students to develop into men, strong, muscular, able-bodied men. The ancient Greeks understood well the fundamental principle of life when they made physical efficiency the basis of education. This is what is wrong with the civilization and ideals current in Sind—neglect of physical efficiency. And our children and children's children cannot play their part in the coming reconstruction unless our schools and colleges give them the physical education which has been so long neglected.

We must begin with the child; not without reason did the great Hindu physician of old, Susruta, emphasise in his 'Ayurveda' the importance of child-training. And a prophet of another nation declared—'A little child shall lead them.' The child is the cradle of the future; and the eternal Wonder-Worker, who shapes the destinies of nations, works His daily

wonders above the hills, along the blue, around the air, painting the rose and setting the stars in the fields of space, in order to bless the nations' children. It is for man to co-operate with the purpose of the universe; it is for us to guard India's future by helping India's children to develop into efficient men—the children whom Krishna loved and Christ blessed, saying—'Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.'

Time fails or I would have proceeded to indicate the place of Oriental literature and of India's women in the reconstruction of education. One thing I needs must add before I conclude. If you are to help in the educational reconstruction of India, your knowledge must be inseparable from the essential qualities of national service. These qualities the great Greek thinker interpreted as wisdom, courage, temperance and justice; these qualities the Teacher of Aryavarta summed up in one beautiful clause when he told Arjuna on the Kuru-field that knowledge was sacrifice. "Knowledge is power," said Bacon; but one greater than Bacon said, "Knowledge is sacrifice" In the old Biblical language, students were called sons of the prophets; I fain would have you realise that you are sons of the Eternal, Who hath sacrificed Himself to lay the foundations of the world. Be it yours to meditate on the

truth that knowledge is sacrifice. Power was the key-note of German education; Napoleon inspired his men with the idea of glory; Rome dreamt the dream of dominion; and Spartan boys were asked to help Sparta to become a great military organisation. But to India a new ideal has been interpreted. Knowledge is sacrifice. Knowledge which is aggressive, science which slays, and culture which comes to kill, are dangerous forces which break down civilization and set up Babel instead. It is a humanising education for which I plead; it is knowledge poured as a sacrifice on the altar of man which will help India in the coming days. Nations cannot live by diplomas and dead creeds; nations live by men who use knowledge in the service of love; men who will tell the truth and rebuke the wrong and be loyal to the law within though the heavens fall.

Not so very different this—you will say—from the ideal of which we read in India's old books? Not different, I am sure, in its essential meaning. To me personally, much of the inspiration of the ideal I live by has come from ancient wisdom; and it may be, many of our 'new' notes in education, poetry, literature, philosophy and religion may soon be discerned to be but the 'mellow trumpet of a distant bell'. For if there be the old which dies and can never come back to life, there is also

the old which ages not—the Ancient which is an echo of the Eternal in man. Some of our modern views may well be re-interpretations of the truth discovered by our ancestors, the elders of our race in some aspiring wonder-moods on their way to that Shrine which our industrial aggressive civilization has swerved from, in its competition for the prizes of mammon and earth-domination. Surely there was some idea, some intuition, some perception of the right educational re-construction, in the old *asrama* where teacher and student met together as members of one household, the teacher calling the pupil his son, the pupil addressing the teacher as the Bhagvata, the blessed one, the giver of joy, offering knowledge as sacrifice. Centres of sacrifice were those old beautiful *asramas*, where the *guru* and the *shishya* lived lyric days communing with the wonder that lives in nature and in the life of nations. And modern India needs schools and colleges which, equipped with modern science and culture, will yet be in tune with the spirit of the old *asramas*, the spirit of the knowledge that is sacrifice. Such institutions will prepare India's men and women to become India's message-bearers in the coming days of world-reconciliation and reconstruction.

INDIAN IDEALS IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

At a time when nations of the West are worshipping mammon and the military machine, it is a relief to find that there are groups of earnest men and women who find inspiration in the wisdom of India's scriptures and India's sages. "We are all wrong," writes an eminent Frenchman, "about what is happiness and what is good. The most generous souls are all wrong, too, because silence and solitude are too often denied them". As a small but significant book, "The Way of Poetry," edited by John Drinkwater, says: "In crowded streets flowers never grow. But many there have died away."

India's sages have been lovers of silence; and they have sung their scriptures away from 'crowded streets,' in the solitudes of forests and streams and hills and mountains. Europe and America have glorified the cults of power and pride, and trampled upon the Sermon on the Mount. Europe and America need a new

voice, not of self-assertion, but of self-denial; the message of Christ the Master, of Buddha the Illuminated—the message to deliver which India lives and strives to be free.

The message has been sung with a poet's vision and a poet's gift of words, and with a wonderful sensitiveness to the great silences of nature, by Rabindra Nath Tagore; and the West has rightly appreciated the 'Gitanjali' as a contribution to world literature. Indian idealism is influencing western thought; and some of the great ideas of the Indian consciousness are influencing western literature. The great Irish poet, Yeats, has, in several of his essays and songs, rung the changes on the Hindu idea of karma and reincarnation. James Stephens has blessed one of his volumes of verses with the title 'Reincarnations,' and Algernon Blackwood and Violet Pearn have in a play attempted to represent dramatically the ideas of karma and reincarnation. The book is frankly named "Karma: A Reincarnation Play". Its hero and heroine live in four different births, in Egypt, Greece, Italy, England. When they live in Egypt, the heroine induces the hero to give up thoughts of priesthood for the sake of her love. Reborn in Greece in the days of Alexander the Great, the heroine induces the hero to betray his country for the sake of her

love! Born again in Italy in the days of Lorenzo de Medici, the heroine induces the hero to prostitute his art for the sake of her love! Born a fourth time in modern England, the heroine induces the hero to decline a high government appointment in Egypt for the sake of her love! So through all these re-incarnations it is the woman who acts as a dragweight on the man. It is not a pleasant thought for those of us who believe that woman will be the centre of the coming civilization, and that her intuition and mysticism and sympathy will help life more in the coming days than the intellect of man. But the great lesson of life stands out clear in the play, the lesson that character is destiny. Your *karma* is what you do; and your deeds become your destiny; nor can you escape this destiny of deeds except through a deed of self-surrender to the beneficent effort of the universe, which, in the language of religion, is called the Grace of God. It is easy for men to say, "This evil thing we do to-day; we shall shake off its influence to-morrow." Life tells a different tale; for the universe moves along the lines of law. The Great Law lives; and the evil that men or nations do pursues them as a sword of justice. The hero in the play succumbed to the persuasions of the heroine in Egypt first, and in every succes-

sive birth was dragged down by the *karma* he himself had created. Our choice may be brief, but it may prove almost endless. As the hero of the play "Karma" says, "The choice is made, not for this life only but for ever."

Yet another book in English which I believe an indication of the growing influence of Indian thought, is Mrs. Rhys Davis' "The Book of the Kindred Sayings". Mrs. Rhys Davis is an ardent student of Buddhism; and this book gives a beautiful translation of sayings of and about the Buddha. The Teacher sits in the forest, yet not cut off from communication with men and women; they come to him from far and near; they come to listen to him; to gaze at the calm beauty of his face and to carry with them some strength for the life of action in the world. A mother tells her little boy to be quiet as they approach him: "Hush! make no noise; the Buddha is speaking holy words," and his holy words have but one dominating idea—the peace of life cometh through self-renunciation, "Save by renouncing," says the Teacher, "no safety can I see for living things." So it is when a Brahmin farmer who has lost fourteen oxen sees him in the forest seated cross-legged, and with a wondrous beauty and calm on his face, the farmer spontaneously says; "It is good to be like unto this man; he loses no oxen!

And for him there never comes at dawn a man chiding him with debts and saying 'come pay! come pay!' Therefore, a happy man is he." Happy indeed; for he—the Buddha—walked The Way of Self-Renunciation.

There is a book named "Karma" by that famous interpreter of Japan, Lafcadio Hearn. There is a play on Krishna and the Gopis by the famous Irish poet, James Stephens; these and other books afford proof of the growing influence of Indian idealism on groups of earnest men and women in the West. Some of them, indeed, appreciate Indian thought and literature and religion,—the philosophy of the East, the poetry of Iqbal, the mysticism of the Upanishads—better than many of us who call ourselves Indians but are strangers to our rich intellectual inheritance. This book "The Book of the Kindred Sayings," presents in a simple and suggestive way the message of the Buddha's life. It brings from the past a message we need to sustain us in the struggles of the present. It is a message the modern world needs. For life to-day is full of restlessness, of world-weariness. I recall the words put by a Russian novelist in the mouth of a doctor who feels the dulness of life and who, therefore, eats enormously whenever he gets a chance. "Yes"! says the doctor, 'if one thinks about it, you know, looks into it and

analyses all this hotch-potch, if you will allow me to call it so, it is not life but more like a fire in a theatre". Modern life, indeed, is full of flaming unrest. The Buddha who looked at it directly as a seer, saw that the remedy for unrest was self-renunciation. India's sons are restless too,—restless with a righteous impulse of freedom. But freedom will not come till we practise *tapasya*. The power of *tapasya* will heal the hearts and maladies of a long-suffering people, and India will re-arise to help the nations.

BHAKTI-MARGA

There was once a boy called Svetaketu. To him his father said: "Svetaketu, go, walk the Brahma-way." The boy was twelve years old. When he returned to his father's house he was a young man of twenty-four. Alas! he returned self-conceited, proud of his learned lore...Then his father said to him: "Svetaketu! thou art proud of thy learned lore; but beloved! hast thou sought the lore whereby that which is not heard is heard, that which is not seen is seen, that which is not understood is understood?"

And that 'lore' whereby that which is not heard is heard, that which is not seen is seen, that which is not understood is understood—that was called the *Gnân*, the *Brahma Gnân*. Mark the difference between *gnân* and *vidya*. *Vidya* is scholarship, learning; and many there be who have it, but yet do not possess *Gnân*. *Gnân* is interior illumination, and many there be who have it but not *vidya*. Sri Ram Krishna Paramahansa was a man of *gnân*; he was

not versed in books, but he studied the inner encyclopædia of the soul; he was a man of emancipated heart and had his shining seat in the inner shrine of the temple, the Holy of holies where glows the Light.

This *gnân* comes in many ways—sometimes, as in the case of Sankara, through the longing to understand; sometimes, as in the case of Buddha, through a contemplation of the sufferings of others; sometimes through art-impulse awakened by a strange form of beauty; sometimes, it may be, through some snatches of sacred song; sometimes through the Voice of the Silence within. In many ways does the Spirit of God touch the soul of man and lead the seeker on the Path that stretches from the life of the world to the Life of Fullness in the Eternal.

The Path is one, though the stages are various; and what are called *karma*, *gnân* and *bhakti* are not separate paths but stages in the One Path; *karma*, *gnân* and *bhakti* involve one another; so it has been said that Bhakti involves *anurukti* i.e. *rukti* (affection) which arises after *(anu)* a *knowledge* of the Lord. I wish here to speak of the *bhakti* stage on the Path.

And to start with, I am at a loss to give an exact English equivalent of the term *bhakti*. It is not belief; it is not mere 'faith'; it is not

devotion simply; it is not meditation. The word *bhakti* has about it a peculiar flavour, and I find it untranslatable. An interpretative analysis of what *bhakti* means to me is all I may endeavour to indicate.

The basis of *bhakti* is a recognition of the inspiring truth that God is "*ananda*", the Spirit of love and joy. Kapila speaks in one passage of the "divinely beauteous form of the Lord"; and of the "Lord having lotus-eyes". Yes, the *ananda*, the Love-Joy, the Beauty of the Parent-Spirit calls us; and *bhakti* is the answer of the human soul to this Divine Call. The Parent-Spirit is in the Universe to build up centres of Beauty, Love and Joy. So it is that in our devotional literature we speak of God as the Mother. God is the Mother-heart of the Universe; therefore is Love the supreme reality of experience. An ancient tradition represents the Lord as the Charioteer: if, indeed, the saving Love of the Lord were not the Charioteer, how could the car of the Universe move to the "one far-off divine event"? A Christian mystic—St. Bernard—has well observed: "The undefiled law of the Lord is love".

Bhakti is a beautiful blend of renunciation and joy. By renunciation is not meant the outer renunciation of the appointments and obligations of life. The family, the society,

the nation, the race, the whole world have sacred claims on us. The ascetic theory of life does violence to the rich resources of the universe. Is not the universe a Self-utterance of the Spirit, an expression of God's *ananda*, the Love-joy of the Lord? By renunciation is meant not the outer but the *inner* renunciation.

Let me proceed to interpret the idea of inner renunciation. And first, there is such a thing as renunciation of the senses, whereby is meant a renunciation of the sense-view of the universe. To him the senses are the gateways of the Lord; but so many of us alas! are tempted by the senses to the pleasant paths of sin. To the *bhakta* things are eloquent with the message of the one Love-Life that flows into the universe and blooms with beauty and joy; the *bhakta* sees God in nature: he accepts the world as the "Body of the Lord"; hence his fellowship with nature, his love of animals and birds and flowers, his reverence for the varied forms of life.

Next note the *bhakta* practises renunciation of desires. This does not mean that he is emotionless. The *bhakta's* heart is not dry; it is full. The truth is there is a difference between desire and aspiration. Desire is for fruit, for some external results; aspiration is for the Lord; desire clings to the finite; aspiration

is the soul's movement to the Infinite. And the *bhakta* is one who endeavours to convert desires into aspiration; he seeks the Lord not thinking of reward or fruit; he does not ask questions as to the utility of religion. The ancient scriptures speak of these desires as 'knots of the heart'; and these 'knots' must be broken by him who would pass into the Shining Presence. "The desire for the objects of the senses falls away when once the Supreme is seen." (Bhagavad Gita).

Many are the desires, 'the knots of the heart', which must be broken as the soul proceeds on the Path. There is pride, self-righteousness, separateness, out of which spring anger and malice. Not without reason did the blessed Jesus declare:—"Blessed are the poor in spirit"; and Sri Chaitanya said:—"Chant the name of the Lord, becoming as humble as grass, as patient as the tree". Holy humility is the secret of higher life. Then there is the desire for earthly things, for position, power, money. This desire, too, must we convert into aspiration by spending our talents and power in the service of the Lord. There is the desire for life; and he who would make steady progress on the Path must be ready to surrender even his life to glorify the All Good and the Only Pure. There is the desire for "*swarga loka*" (paradise), for plea-

sures in the after-life; the desire for "*sidhis*" (psychic powers): this too must go: the *bhakta* seeks the Lord for His dear sake, not for the sake of securing a heaven-world. Kapila says:—"And these devotees have no desire for the enjoyment of the splendour and riches of Vaikuntha (heaven), nor for the eight kinds of superhuman powers."

The *bhakta* must also practise the renunciation of the *manas*. The *manas* is the principle of calculation; and what is ordinarily called "intellect" is often but another name for calculation of consequences, determination of probabilities. And if the realities of religion are to be discerned, it is necessary to rise to the plane of the higher reason which is more than mere understanding, of intuition which is more than intellect. Pythagoras was asked: What is God? He asked first for two days, next for eight days, to answer the question; and at last he said he was unable to reply. When Buddha was plied with questions concerning the origin and history and consitution of the world, he but smiled and was silent. Intellect or the *manas* discloses 'instrumental truth,' '*vyavaharic*' truth; but the *paramarthic* truth, which is *the Truth*, is revealed through personal communion with the Highest. The soul-life is more than the *manas*; and the true *bhakta* is one in whom is developed the soul-life,

the life of the intuitional self. So it is that he is a man of *sradha*, of faith, of ultimate trust in the Universe; he does not profess to solve the problem of the universe by constructing syllogisms; he recognises that there is a dark element in the world; not his the creed of butterfly optimism; he knows that evil is not yet confounded; he adores the Good as the sovereign reality of the universe. Therefore, too, he avoids indulging in unkind criticism; he seeks to be above the dust of controversy; he appreciates the truth that there are no rivalries in the realm of religion, for all world-religions seek but to spell the One Secret concerning the Self-Revelation of the Spirit.

The *bhakta* practises, too, the renunciation of will. Crucifixion of self-will is the law to which he wishes to conform to. God the Parent-Spirit, not his own little self, is the centre of his life. And is not all sin self-centredness? Through active work and patient endurance, the *bhakta* realises the truth that all must be consecrated to the Lord; and ever the prayer on his lips is to the sacred one:—"unto Narayana" "unto the Lord". It is not a little significant that the word *bhakti* is radically connected with a word which means *service;* the true *bhakta* is not a man of pale contemplation; he is a *servant* of the Lord. In pain and poverty, in suffering and sorrow he glorifies

the All-love, knowing that suffering purifies, chastens, strengthens and develops the soul.

The *bhakta's* "renunciation" is thus not a negative withdrawal from the world, but a positive communion with God: it is blended with joy. "*Bhakti*", says Sandilya, "is affection fixed upon the Lord"; it is "abiding with the Lord". So great is a *bhakta's* joy in God, that the very thought of forgetting his Lord is to him a source of misery. Petschnikoff, the Russian violinist, fell seriously ill when his violin slipped from his hand and was smashed; even so the true *bhakta* experiences a feeling of intense misery at the very thought of being away from the Lord. So Prahlad had only one boon to ask of God: "The only blessing I crave for is not to forget Thee". Living in the shining Presence of the All-Love, the *bhakta* is filled with a strange love in the midst of all the friction of the world. Such love had Sri Chaitanya, and so when Jagai and Madhai abused and stoned him he uttered no word except those of blessing and affectionate appeal to them to sing the blessed Name of the Lord. On another occasion he burst into the prayer:—"I crave not for money, nor for men, nor for a beautiful woman, nor for poetic genius, O Lord of the world: I only crave that in every birth of mine, *bhakti* may grow in me towards thee, O Lord". Such

love had Nanak, and he sang the wondrous song:—"Love God as the lotus loves the water, as the fish the water, as the *chàtak* the rain". Such love had Mira Bai, and there came to her a vision so sweet, so sacred that, when troubled and tortured even by her own husband, she exclaimed:—"The Blessed Lord is here, even here: can you not see His Splendour?" Such love had the Persian mystic Rabia, and so she married not, and when sought by princes she only answered that she was "wounded with the love of the Lord". Surdas, the blind bard of Agra, Tulsidas the mystic author of the Ramayana, Banka the poor wood-cutter's wife, Haridas the singer of the sacred song, Gopala who when smitten on one cheek turned also the other, Kabir and Dadu and Tukaram and Nandadas—all drank of the Cup of Sacred Love, and so did each become an eye-witness to the Spirit. And was not the spell of this Holy Love on Jelal-ud-Din Rumi when he turned round and round the pillar in his house and sang the song of "our journey to the Rose-Garden of Union"? And that love possessed Sri Krishna, and so he played upon his Flute and went with love-filled eyes sounding the sacred song and ravishing the hearts of shepherds and the *gopis* to whom the vision came because their hearts were pure and their faith was rich.

Such love is needed to-day in India. Alas! there is strife, there is lovelessness in this ancient land where 'Daya Dharam', the religion of mercy and love, has been proclaimed over and over again. In the name of religion we quarrel with one another, forgetting that religion is meant not to separate but to unify the forces of experience and life. And still the Lord of Love is with us: He calls us to Himself to find Himself in us and to show us the Splendour of our Higher Self in Him. How long, how long, brother! wilt thou keep thy heart in exile? The Eternal seeks it and longs to breathe on it the benediction of His Beauty. God the '*Samasthi*,' the Universal, calls us to participate in the Life Universal. Sundered from the Parent-Spirit, we still have the true guide to the Original Home in the love which leads to self-surrender. A touching little song of the people says:—"His flute doth call and I must go. Easy or hard, it matters not: his flute doth call and I must go; and though the way be through the forest thick with thorns, I must go". Yes—our God is irresistible; His flute doth call, and you and I and every one must go. The sacred flute has sounded notes of love again and again: who can keep Him off? His flute doth call and we must go. Often we try to shut Him out: veil after veil do we throw between Him and ourselves in our pursuit

of pleasure and gain. His Love leaves us not in the dust but stoops to raise and sanctify and bless the human heart and give us glimpses of the Sacred Beauty. And by the gateway of our hearts He still doth stand: His flute continues to call. Floating over the fresh morning breeze and in the eventide when the Supreme Artist weaves the wonders of stars and shadows and gloom, and in the sacred solitudes of the soul, the sound of His flute continues to come. His flute doth call: shall we not go? Easy or hard; it matters not: His flute doty call: we too shall go: we too, shall thread our way through the forest thick with thorns: we shall thread our way till we see Him face to face with the flute on His lips. And then—what then? Then we shall surrender to Him the key to the door of our hearts: and He will enter into us and light with his Blessed Hands our unlit lamps, and He will bind our brows with the Sacred Light, and He Himself will sing to us the Song of Joy—the Joy that floats from leaf to leaf and flower to flower and wave to wave and star to star—the Joy that calls us Home.

CHRIST OR CIVILIZATION?

Looking out sadly on the nations smitten with unrest, an Indian lover of the West is constrained to ask: What is the malady of modern Europe? We witness at this hour a world-breakdown such as history does not record, unless we go back in imagination to the days of the Aryavarta as she was after the Kurus had fought the patriotic Pandavas in the long ago.

Is the civilization of Europe dying? Here is suggested one of those vital questions to which not sufficient attention seems to be paid to-day, except by a few thinkers with a world-vision and world-message such as—to select only three, each from a different country—Rabindranath Tagore, Romain Rolland and Abdul Baha. The world-war now over is a sad commentary on a civilization smitten with the will-to-power. Read the books "I Accuse" and "The Crime" written by a German author, and you will understand what crimes a nation great in science, industry, and intellectual resources, can commit.

The Peace Conference appointed a Commission on Responsibilty and Penalties; the Commission has now published a list of thirty two crimes by the German Government, Army and Navy; the list includes crimes such as the torture and starvation of civilians, rape, abduction of girls and women for enforced prostitution, poisoning of water wells, murders and massacres and deliberate bombardment of hospitals. The modern nations—French writers use the expressive term *nations polices* (police-nations)—have equipped themselves with commerce, with military and naval strength; have they built up a *human* society? Or is it true that this civilization rests on competition, conflict, suspicious antipathy? So great a soldier as Marshal Foch said the other day: "Our peace should be a peace of victors; seventy million Germans will always be a menace to France, and if to France, then to the world at large.' But will 'a peace of victors' make the world's future safe? The blockade of Central Europe supplies a sad answer to the question.

Separatism has been the sin of external types of civilization; the very socialism of Europe is hunger-born, and, in its extreme form of Bolshevism, is busy to-day hurling the vengeance of the working classes against the educated and propertied class. The very League of Nations

is a league practically of governments and powers of the West, not as it should be, not as Keshub Chandra of blessed memory, dreamt it would be, a family of nations, a confraternity of the world's peoples including all the African nations, all the Asian nations, and so verifying the vision of us who yet believe in the coming of a day of the union of East and West. Europe is, undoubtedly, great in many things; she is great in science, in commerce, in riches of the mind, in powers of organisation, in traditions of national freedom. But this greatness, this culture, this love of freedom itself, when not controlled by a higher ideal can only develop strife and hatred. That ideal is *maitri*, the vision of the *man universal*. For lack of *maitri*, the Vision of Man as Man, the history of modern nations has been a series of struggles, sustained by what President Clemenceau in his book entitled 'France Facing Christianity' has called—not without approval—'combative passion.' Prussian imperialism was the very apotheosis of a civilisation trampling upon *maitri;* it worshipped power; it developed a cult of nationalism; it glorified warfare and bloodshed. 'The state is power,' said Treitschke; and the cult of power has been the malady of modern life; national egoism, notions of race-superiority, love of domination, are necessarily connected with this cult of power. So it was

that Australia opposed the proposition of the Japanese delegation in the Peace Conference that the League of Nations should affirm the international equality of all races; and Japan itself is not free from this national egoism which goes hand in hand with the cult of power; it was only the other day that a Congress of Koreans in Philadelphia spoke of the Japanese rule in Korea as a reign of violence, and referred to Japan as the 'Prussia of Asia'; the story of Korean unrest and passive revolt supplies a sad commentary on Japan's newly-learned cult of power and national egoism.

It will be showing scant respect for facts to deny the deeper values of Europe for the life of the Orient. Europe has worshipped before the shrine of progress; Europe has broken down the law of custom; the science and organisation of Europe have a great value for us; we need Europe's help to develop critical activity and release our mental energy from fetters of convention; we have yet to re-make our national manhood; and do we not need the inspiration of that spirit of freedom which has blessed England, making her great among the nations and giving her the wisdom to recognise the principle of self-determination with regard to Canada, Australia, South Africa, Poland, Finland and the little country of the Jugo Slav? England has not yet applied it to India, not knowing, alas! that

democracy is one of the root-concepts of the Aryan consciousness. England recognises that she must apply it some day; but the recognition has been slow, and the empire, which, I believe, has at heart an idealistic instinct of freedom, has not crossed its line of colour-cleavage. England has yet to rise to a conception of Divine Humanity as the indwelling-spirit of all nations.

The principle of nationality has long been a source of strife and warfare; the cult of power and national egotism is the very superlative of vulgarity; and this is what has tainted civilization again and again. Nationality becomes vulgarity if it becomes so narrow, so sectarian, so exclusive as to antagonise other nations with a view to expansion, exploitation, or domination. A nation is on the right path when it strives after greatness, not for aggrandisement or earth-hunger, but in order to serve humanity greatly. Nothing human is alien to me;—this is the *mantra* of the true servant of his nation. Is he an Indian? He knows he is not merely an Indian; he appreciates and assimilates all that is good in the culture and life of the Englishman; he has a genuine human feeling for the Englishman; he is an admirer of the Englishman's fine traditions of freedom. Is he an Englishman? He knows he is not merely an Englishman;

he appreciates the value of India's culture: he stands beyond the limit-lines of colour and creed; he has genuine sympathy with India's aspiration towards a fuller life. Such men, no matter what their native land, realise that they belong to the one Brotherhood of Man. They are world-citizens; they are conscious of an eternal Kingdom of Humanity; they have what the Buddha called *maitri*—the friendship and fellowship with man, with the universe.

The malady of modern life is its egotism, its greed of gold, its gospel of race, its cult of power. Is it a wonder that at the heart of it is a deep unrest? India's souls are restless—restless with the modern impulse of freedom. But the true road to freedom is not egotism or power; the true road is to practise *tapasya* and build life in the inner depths of the Soul. *Maitri* is a sense of oneness with all our fellows, with all the universe; and as long as our civilization is not controlled by this sense, we cannot honestly say it is democratic.

"Who are you, elderly man, so gaunt and grim, with well-greyed hairs, and flesh all sunken about the eyes? Who are you, my dear comrade?

"I think I know you—I think this face of yours is the face of Christ himself;

"Dead and divine, and the brother of all, and here again he lies."

It is the Face of Christ that the modern nations have forgotten; it is the dream of the Kingdom of Souls they have wished to tear from their hearts. Hence our nationalisms are exclusive; our patriotism is tainted with egotism; our cities have become centres of confusion; they are not Cities of Friends; hence the orgy of industrialism and the chaos of *kultur* which cannot see the Kingdom of Heaven beyond the State nor the Brotherhood of Man beyond the Nations. The nations glory in world-consciousness, but have forgotten spirit-consciousness; and what avails it if a nation gain the whole earth but lose its own soul? It is this soul-forgetfulness which has made modern life restless; and the solution of the problems of freedom and progress and peace, of the organisation of diverse interests and cultures and races, the solution of the problems of to-day, will not come without a conviction that there is the One Eternal Self living and moving and growing in all. Once in the life of India this conviction was strong—the conviction of the Eternal *Purusha* in all; India then was great and strong. This conviction passed away; the *sudra* was trampled upon by the 'superior' man; race-friction appeared; India's political unity was sundered, and she fell. Is India much better to-day? or is the old problem of

race-union still unsolved and the old sin of denying to the depressed classes their human rights still on India's head?

The new awakening in India will not unfold its issues if we still indulge in the old sin of caste. India's hope and the hope of the nations is in the ancient Aryan teaching: "The Eternal is one; He hath no caste." A brotherly civilization is the world's need. The nations need the inspiration of the bold teaching that man is not a fighting animal but a citizen of the Kingdom of Souls. The dominating motives of civilization are external, commercial, placing utility above truth, nation above humanity, diplomacy above morality, the interests of the actual above the demand of the ideal. The only chance for a world-reconciliation, for a new civilization, is in a change of heart, an appreciation of life's inner values. A civilization may expand ever so much, but if there be emptiness at its centre, if it is not enriched with the truths of the inner-life, it is even as a soap bubble which is bound to break. Europe has studied phenomenal nature; Europe has given prominent value to national interests; but its science and nation-cults when uncontrolled by the vision of the Kingdom of Souls, a sense of the *maitri*, of man's spiritual unity, become only cults of power and pride. To this vision of man's spiritual unity the vision of

the Eternal *Purusha* in all, India's prophets have borne witness from the Vedic age of the Aryan *rishis* down to the modern age of Sri Keshub Chandra. India's greatness passed away in the day India trampled on this vision. India has awakened, and several silent centuries look upon us to-day, eager to know if we shall win our pride or shame in the coming days. Is India anxious to vindicate herself? Then must she not forget the lesson of her history, but through all her strivings for political greatness and material efficiency, she must express the truth of her heart—the truth of the freedom of the Spirit. Ages back this truth was taught by the *rishis* and the Buddha and the Master who spoke of the Kingdom within; and in the service of this Truth is the hope of India and the healing of the nations.

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